

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 and 27-44 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-13, 27-31, 40, 43, and 44 stands rejected. Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8, 11-13, 27, 29 and 44 have been amended and new Claims 45-50 have been added herein. Claims 3 and 7 have been cancelled herein. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the present amendments and following remarks. The above amendments and following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action and to render all claims at issue patentably distinct over the references cited.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-8, 13, 27, 28, 40, 43 and 44 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over McCardle et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,239,401) and Ettinger (U.S. Patent No. 3,694,611). This rejection is respectfully traversed. It is believed that the originally filed claims are patentably distinct over the cited references. Notwithstanding, Claim 1 has been amended by essentially adding the elements of dependent claims 2, 3 and 7. In contrast, the claimed combination of elements, especially as amended, are not disclosed, suggested or motivated within the cited references. Radical reengineering, given the improper benefit of hindsight reasoning, would be required to combine the cited references to arrive at the presently amended claim 1.

Furthermore, independent Claim 27 has been amended to state that a feeding channel extends through both of the actuators. Support for this amendment can be found in at least Applicant's originally filed Figure 2 as well as in the accompanying text in at least paragraph numbers [0030], [0034] and [0035]. In contrast, the cited references do not disclose, suggest or motivate the claimed combination of elements, especially as amended.

Furthermore, it is assumed that independent Claim 32 has been allowed, despite the uncertainty of line 3 of Section 2 in the Office Action.

Moreover, the previously filed independent claim 40, at lines 10-12, states "wherein the weld stud contacts against the workpiece prior to engagement by the chucking members and at least part of the weld stud remains within the nosepiece before chucking." None of the cited references, however, disclose, suggest or motivate this feature especially in the claimed combination. The advantages are disclosed in paragraph [0007] of the originally filed application. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the instant rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over McCardle et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed. It is believed that the originally filed claims are patentably distinct over the cited reference. The Examiner's assumptions with regard to functional equivalents are hereby challenged as lacking support, especially in light of the presently claimed combination of features. Notwithstanding, this rejection is deemed moot in light of the amendment to the base independent claim. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the instant rejection be withdrawn.

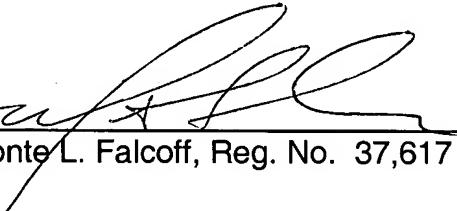
Claims 29-31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as alleged being unpatentable over McCardle et al. in view of Torvinen (U.S. Patent No. 6,388,224). This rejection is respectfully traversed. It is believed that the originally filed claims are patentably distinct over the cited references. Notwithstanding, independent Claim 29 has been amended to state that the storage chamber is secured to and always moving with the robotic arm member when the member is moved. In contrast, the cited references do not teach, suggest or motivate the claimed combination of features,

especially as amended. For example, the feeding device 80 of Torvinen is stationary and not secured to or movable with a robotic arm. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the instant rejection be withdrawn.

Finally, it is assumed that dependent claim 42 has been objected to rather than "allowed" given the rejection of its base claim 27.

In view of the instant amendments, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if he has any suggestions in the unlikely event that all of the claims are not allowable. Accordingly, it is requested that the Examiner pass the case to issue at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Monte L. Falcoff, Reg. No. 37,617

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HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

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